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Involucrin and tumor progression in the uterine cervix.

Nair SA, Nair MB, Jayaprakash PG, Rajalekshmy TN, Nair MK, Pillai MR.

Division of Laboratory Medicine, Regional Cancer Center, Thiruvananthapuram, India.

The expression of involucrin, a cytoplasmic protein synthesized during squamous maturation, was assessed by immunocytochemistry in different grades of cervical lesions. In normal/benign cervical epithelium and low-grade squamous intraepithelial lesions [SILS or cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN)-1] involucrin showed intense and homogenous cytoplasmic expression in the spinal layers of 75 and 57% of samples, respectively. The basal cell layers showed no expression of involucrin. In high-grade SILs (CIN-2/3) 40% of the samples showed diffuse and focal cytoplasmic expression of involucrin in the differentiated basaloid cells. In the squamous cell carcinomas (SCCs) analyzed, well-differentiated tumors showed intense focal expression in 61% of the cases, moderately differentiated SCCs showed intense expression in 33% of the cases, while poorly differentiated SCCs (PDSCC) showed only a mild focal expression in 7% of cases. With increasing severity of the lesions, patchy expression of involucrin with a mixture of reactive and nonreactive cells predominated. Patterns of immunocytochemical staining for involucrin in cervical lesions of different grades, from low-grade to high-grade SILs, and invasive carcinoma may be of critical importance, if loss of involucrin expression is used as a criterion for neoplastic transformation in cervical epithelium. Our findings suggest that involucrin may be a sensitive marker in identifying the differentiation status of the lesion while the absence of involucrin in PDSCC may be helpful in differential diagnosis.

PMID: 9159028 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

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